

## [Mr. Evan Morris Jones]

Form [A?]

Circumstances of Interview No. 2

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

August 30, 1938

Subject——— Welsh-American Folklore

1. Interview on evening of August 30, 1938 at 7;30 p. m.
2. At the home of the informant
3. Informant— Mr. Evan Morris Jones, East Main Street, Poultney Vermont.
4. Glynn Jones, son of the informant, advised me to interview his father on the subjects,
5. Unaccompanied
6. The informant's home is located on the East end of Main St. in Poultney. It is the second house on the north side of the street after passing over Stone Church Hill in the direction of East Poultney. It is a two and a half story building, painted a dull gray with deep green trim, standing among many similarly constructed homes on that part of the street. There is a small lawn in front of the house, and a gravel walk leads [ acss?] across to the porch of the building. Vine leafs wind from the [balus?]-trade of the porch to the roof above. The

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doorway is shaded by the mass of leaves. It was evening when I arrived. The informant met me in the dim doorway and invited me in. We sat in the [parler?] of his home in deep restful chairs. Through the large window a group of boys could be seen playing with a football. The informant re-lighted his pipe, and our conversation began. It became darker as the evening dusk approached, so the informant turned on the lights and revealed more sharply a room containing a piano, many books, an oil painting of [Carnarvon?] Castle in Wales, and a large table covered with reading matter. The room appeared neat and comfortable, having the appearance and feeling of being well lived in by the inhabitants.

Form B Personal History of Informant Vermont C. F. Derven

Poultney

August 30, 1938

Subject——— Mr. Evan Morris Jones, East Main St., Poultney, Vt.

1. Welsh ancestry
2. Born at [Penygrees?], [Carnarvonshire?], North Wales on November 5, 1883.
3. He is married. He has a wife, and three two children, one boy, and one girl.
4. He has lived in Wales, in Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, and in Poultney, Vt.
5. He was educated at the Friars' School, Banger, Wales. It is a school founded by ancient monks.
6. He has worked as a stone-cutter, and as a slate-worker.
7. He is interested in music, literature, poetry, and history. He reads and speaks Welsh and English. To the interviewer's knowledge, he is very well informed on these subjects.

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### 8. Christian

9. The informant is a man of small stature, and slight. He has a finely shaped head and face, reddish-brown hair, and the weathered skin of an outdoor worker. His voice is richly [modulated?], quiet, and well-controlled. His face is lean, seamed with lines about the mouth. In repose his expression is calm; and when conversing he has a lively and humorous look about his eyes and mouth. He knows how to laugh and appreciate a good story in telling it. He has the imagination necessary to meet the requirements of a tall tale, and especially enjoys stories of practical jokes. He, and his family are cultured, educated, and pleasant. At the time of the interview the informant had finished a day at the quarries, and was sitting down after supper with his pipe. Our conversation lasted over three hours, and during the latter part of it the rest of the family joined in. The interviewer was impressed, and pleased by the friendliness, and knowledge of many subjects which they had at their command. The entire family speaks, and reads both Welsh, and English. The children are talented musicians, and the son, especially, is a brilliant student. He is studying to be a minister, having finished a regular college course. It would be difficult to find a more cultured Welsh- American family around Poultney.

Form C Text of Interview No. 2 (Unedited)

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

August 30, 1938

Subject——— Welsh-American Folklore

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Q. Do the Welsh people in Poultney tell the myths, and tales of Wales to their children in Welsh or in English?

A. Most of the people who were born in Wales, and came to this country speak Welsh, and have taught their children to speak it. I think that most of the tales are remembered and told in Welsh. The type of tale that appeals to the Welsh mind would lose much of its humor, and probably the point of the story if told in English.

Q. Then it would be difficult to get the best tales?

A. Yes. I do not believe you will find much that would not have to be translated, especially the Welsh poetry and songs. These that are written by Welsh-Americans are in Welsh too. To translate them, you would have to be a scholar in the language, and a good poet as well.

Q. Who have been the best poets around here? I have heard of one named John Jones, and called 'Bard'.

A. I worked beside John Jones for years in the quarries. I knew him very well. He wrote very fine poetry. His name among the Welsh people was 'Lean Eryri'. Those who knew his poetry knew him only by that name.

Q. That name 'Lean Bryri' was given to him, or was it a pen-name?

A. No. That was his Welsh name. His full name in English was John William Jones.

Q. What type of poetry did he write?

A. He wrote odes, and almost all other types. He would often write a poem on a piece of waste slate as he worked in the slate quarry. He would throw them away, but I saved the poems by copying them from the slates. I have none of them now. And I do not know where you could find any of his poems. There is a possibility that his grandchildren

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might have some of them. A few were published in Welsh-American newspapers and magazines.

Q. All of them are in Welsh ?

A. Yes. None that I know of has been translated.

Q. There were others who wrote poetry I suppose?

A. Yes. I have a copy of an ode by a man named Walters, who lived in North Poultney at one time. It is one of the finest I have ever read. It is a very long ode, and would be hard to translate.

Q. Could you give me a few of the characteristics of Welsh poetry?

A. It is alliterative poetry much like that of the Angle-Saxons. The [diphthongs?] are made to respond to one another.

Q. Do the poems tend to have a longer line because of the alliteration?

A. The number of syllables, and the number of feet vary. There may be eight, or more syllables to the line. There is no set number.

Q. I have been told that the sound of the language and much of the meaning would be lost in translation? Is that right?

A. Welsh is so much different from English that translation would change the poems. The language is different in many ways. There are sounds in Welsh that an English speaking person cannot make. The alphabet is different, and some letters of the English alphabet are not used in Welsh. Each letter has but one sound; for instance, the letter 'c' is always pronounced like 'k', the letter 'f' is always pronounced as 'v', and 'ff' is the English 'f'. A. There were several men around here who wrote songs in Welsh and English. One of them

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was William Griffiths. His Welsh name was Gwilym [Galedffrwd?]. He composed a number of pieces that were used in Eisteddveds. One of them was an arrangement of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul", the hymn that is sung in churches. He wrote it for four parts, and a [soprano?] solo. The solo begins the piece.

Q. He must have been an accomplished musician to do that.

A. There was another man, a minister, who lived here for some time. His name was Reverend William Glyn Williams. I have a copy of a song he wrote called, " Night and Dawn." I have a copy of Griffith's song too.

Q. May I see them? I'm no musician but I'd like to see them.

A. Certainly. These were published by music companies in other states. They are well-known to Welsh people here.

Q. Those two men are not living [around here now, are they?

A. No. Griffiths is dead. He died a number of years ago. The minister moved away from here. Griffiths was an organist in one of the churches here in Poultney.

Form D

Extra Comment - Interview No. 6

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

September 7, 1938 Welsh Folklore

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Subject———— Interview ( 2nd ) with Mr. Evan M. Jones on the subject of a poem, " Y Ewthyn Bach To Gwellt."

It was necessary to procure a copy of the poem mentioned above. The poem itself was parodied at an [Eisteddvod?]- ( See Interview No. L- Welsh-American [Eisteddvods?]- Informants— Mrs. Ellen Roberts and Mrs. L.O. Davis ) - by a man from another town.

The poem, according to Mr. Jones, was written by a man from West Pawlet, Vermont. The man's son is living in that town now. The informant was unable to tell me any other details about the composer. The poem has been set to music. References as to where the musical score could be found were given.

The subject of the poem is the faith that a child had in his old grandmother. During a lightning and thunder storm the child has no fear because his grandmother is present. The title means, "In a little thatched-roofed house ( or cottage )."

Form C

Text of Interview No. 6 ( Unedited)

( Informant— same as in Interview No. 2— Welsh- American Folklore.

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

September 7, 1938

Subject———— Welsh- American Poetry

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Q. Mr. Jones, do you have a copy of the poem, " Y Ewthyn Bach To Gwellt," that I may see?

A. I have a song book of Welsh and American Folk Songs with that in it. I will get it for you.

Q. ( Looking at copy) Was this poem written by a local man?

A. It was written by a man from West Pawlet, Vermont. It is a fine poem, and very popular among the Welsh people. There are a number of popular Welsh songs in this pamphlet. It was published in Utica, N. Y. for Welsh- American people.

Q. I will tell you why I wanted the poem. Some man got up at an Eisteddvod here in Poultney, and read a parody on part of this poem. ( Read the parody from Interview No. 1 — Welsh-American Eisteddvods— Form C— Informant- Mrs. Ellen Roberts.)

A. That is on the part marked, " Cydgan". It is the chorus of the poem, or song. It was set to music; but, I haven't a copy of the music. This book gives only the words.

Q. Has it ever been translated?

A. I don't believe so. The parody is a pretty good version.

Q. Is the parody, except for the Welsh words which were not translated, faithful to the [meter?], and meaning?

A. It is remarkably good. The use of those peculiar word forms has kept the same metrical rhythm. That is the way Welsh reads.

Q. Do you know who composed the music?

A. It was the same man who wrote the poem. "Y BWTHYN BACH TO GWELLT" B flat Fe gollais fy nhad, fe gollais fy mam Pan oeddwn yn blentyn bychan; Nid ydwyf yn [cefie?]



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dim am yr un O'r ddau oedd [mor?] [heffus?] o'u baban; Cymerwyd fi gan fy nain, meddent hwy, Mewn storm [o?] daranau a mellt, A magwyd fi gan fy nain ar y plwy' Yn y Bwthyn Bach To Gwellt. Cydgan ( Chorus ) Pan yn [rhuo?] byddai'r daran, Ac yn [gwibio?] byddai'r mellt, O! 'rwyn [cofio?] fel y llechwn Yn y Bwthyn Bach To Gwellt. Pan byddai'r rhew a'r eira gwyn O amgylch y [awthyn?] bychan, Eisteddwn yn ddedydd ar fy stol fach A chanwn ar ben yr hen bentan; A'm nain yn dysgu adnodau i mi Yn nghanol [yatorom?] o fellt; Rhyw nefeedd fach gu i mi a fy nain Oedd y Bwthyn Bach To Gwellt. Cydgan— Pan yn rhue byddai'r daran, etc. Fe fyddwn yn chwareu o gwmpas yr ardd— Cartrefle y diwyd wenyn, A difyr y [treulaaus?] i lawer awr I chwilio am nyth yr aderyn; Mae hiraeth dwys yn fy nghalon brudd, Nes ydyw bron myned yn ddellt,— O na bawn [eto?] yn blentyn fy nain, Yn y Bwthyn Bach To Gwellt[,] Cydgan — etc. Fe fyddwn yn myned gyda fy nain Trwy'r ddol, gan ei galw'n fami, A hithau mewn hiraeth dwys am fy mam A'l chalon [oeda?] gynt yn fy ngbaru A chyda hi byddwn i yn mhob man, A'm dillad yn wynion a glan, Ond erbyn hyn mae fy nain yn y llan Yn huno yn y graian man. Cydgan— Pan yn [rhuo?] byddai'r daran, etc. T. Lloyd ( Crych Elen ). word beginning with 'L' has a sound that only a Welsh speaking person knows how to make. ( The informant demonstrated the sound, and convinced the interviewer.)

Q. The Welsh prose would be hard to translate too, I imagine. Do you recall any tales of Wales that would be short and simple to translate?

A. I was going to tell you about the "[Mabinogion?]", which is a collection of Welsh myths. It has been translated and is well known. Some of the tales were in my son's college textbooks. You could find a copy of that and read some of them. There is a short story that I remember. It is humorous, and though much of the point is missing in translation, I will tell it to you.

Q. That story is not in the " Mabinogion", is it?

A. No. This is a story that I have told my children; and it is typical of Welsh humor.

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" A young man hired out to a farmer, and worked on the farm for a short time. He left, and broke his contract. The farmer brought the case to court. When the judge asked the young man why he had left, and broken his contract, he answered, " I worked hard on the farm. I didn't get much to eat. When an old hog died I had to eat part of it. A week later the old cow died, and I had to eat part of it. When the old lady died, I left."

Q. I like that story. It certainly is peculiar humor.

A. The Welsh stories, like the Irish, are very imaginative. Some of the stories that the men make-up in the quarries are so imaginative that they would not be humorous to most people. I wish you could hear, and understand them. But they are in Welsh. An early settler of East Poultney had built a dam across the Poultney river to supply power to his mill. Spring freshets tore the dam out. So he built another one that was much better, and said, " God Almighty won't tear that one out." The spring flood came the next year and again tore out the dam. After building an even better new dam, the man said, " Well, last year I said that God Almighty couldn't tear the dam out. I won't say that again, but I will say that wind and water won't tear this one out. "